



Photo by GILDA LYON

JUNG ENVIRONMENTALISTS: Elementary students Britney Huggins, left, and Carla Shackelford water newly planted landscaping at Howard School of Academics and Technology. They and their classmates will be assisted on such projects this week by 39 other youths from across the nation.

AmeriCorps To Help Students At Howard

By AM HENDERSON
Press Staff Writer

AmeriCorps, President Clinton's domestic version of the Peace Corps, is coming to Chattanooga. Thirty-nine members of the national service program will arrive Thursday from 18 cities across the country. In three days, they will work on budding young environmentalists involved in the local YMCA's Service Corps, a service-learning program that teaches teenagers to be leaders in environmental education and action.

Introduced here by the YMCA's ESC director Amy Conley, the visitors focus their efforts on Howard School of Academics and Technology, which the former Cleveland "farm girl" admits has been her favorite among the seven area schools her program is working with. Teachers and students from Howard will enlist their AmeriCorps guests in a number of projects at the school.

The AmeriCorps members will help teachers and students make classrooms better learning environments, stencil "Dump No Waste, Drains to River" signs on area storm drains, landscape the school grounds and work on the wildlife area behind the school.

"We're going to take advantage of their help while they're here, for sure," said Ms. Conley. "I'm not a Clinton fan, but AmeriCorps seems like a great program, and this may be our only chance to get any assistance from it, the way things are looking in Congress."

She's right. AmeriCorps is near the top of congressional Republicans' proposed deficit-reduction "hit" list. Ms. Conley, a greenways coordinator for the national Trust for Public Lands before she resigned to help establish the Earth Service Corps program here last year, is familiar with budget battles.

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Flower Power Regard For Endangered

By J.B. COLLINS

Free Press Urban Affairs Editor

A portion of the city's multimillion-dollar sewer construction project in Big Ridge has been delayed for a year after an endangered plant was found growing in the area, Public Works Administrator Jack Marcellis confirmed.

Work on getting sewers to some 240 houses in two exclusive, lake-front subdivisions was halted after the discovery of the presence of a small wildflower called mountain skullcap.

In one case, TVA property was involved and the federal agency notified the city of the presence of the flower within the construction area.

This section of 40 houses was pulled out of the contract so that work could continue on the other sections, Mr. Marcellis said.

The homes, located on Lake Shadow Circle, Middle Ridge Lane and Crystal Lake Lane, could have been served by a natural gravity flow, according to Jack Wilkinson, city engineer, but because the line had to be moved away from areas where the flowers were growing "tunneling and pumps" will now have to be used.

Engineers are still working on a design for the project, which

"I don't know there was any could have avoided delays and extra expenses in the ... We didn't even know of the existence of the flower."

— Jack Marcellis
Public Works Administrator

TODAY'S WEATHER

SOME SUN
HIGH: 46
LOW: 30
DETAILS ON C



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in the spotlight, George Burns said the comedian's manager, Irving Fein. "George is the same as

Still, the century mark wasn't going by unnoticed.

70-foot tall electronic marquee to its longtime headliner.

AmeriCorps: To Help Howard Students

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The federal budget debate was well under way by last October when she attended an AmeriCorps conference in the Catskill Mountains of upstate New York, so the Bradley County High and UTC graduate made an earnest and apparently persuasive appeal to AmeriCorps leaders to help Chattanooga while they could.

"I just kept telling them how beautiful Chattanooga is and how much progress is being made here on the environment through community initiatives and that they really ought to come here and see for themselves," said the energetic Earth Service Corps director.

Convinced, AmeriCorps started designating a team that would come here from such far-flung places as New York, Chicago, Seattle and San Francisco.

Although she regularly works at various schools and centers with her staff members Kristin Knight and Jason Shelton, Ms. Conley said she feels especially drawn to the students at Howard. "They're so into it, they're really bright, and in (Lyndhurst Foundation-honored teacher) Gilda Lyon they have an outstanding environmental mentor."

Already, Ms. Conley and Ms. Lyon have led the students in researching environmental problems and tackling many of them.

Their appreciation for the environment makes students from the school, which was built on a former dump site, "especially a good match for these AmeriCorps folks to work with," Ms. Conley added.

The visitors coming this week were selected from AmeriCorps' nearly 25,000 members as YMCA Earth Service Corps Fellows. They are specially trained to help

community-based YMCA staff members, teachers, middle and high school students and other community volunteers "get things done," said Ms. Conley, on three fronts: the environment, education, and community-building.

Through AmeriCorps, more than 3,000 low-income teen-agers across the nation have planted

hundreds of trees; removed trash from inner cities, beaches and public lands; monitored water quality in local streams and watersheds; started school-based recycling programs; removed graffiti from public and private property; and established environmental education in elementary schools.

Lively Doubts \$22 Mil

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councilman said. Mr. Lively's vote would assure passage of the mayor's plan, which is scheduled to be voted on in about six weeks. Four votes for the plan have already been counted.

But Mr. Lively stressed the need to keep spending for the combined system "within reason." He said the county should

"tighten their belts like private businesses are having to do" in developing the new school system and to come up with a more reasonable figure than the \$22 million currently discussed.

And he also suggested that whatever tax increases are needed to produce their final figures should be put to a referendum, as required for any increase in the sales tax here.

Flower: Delays Sewer Work

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cated along the eastern shore of Lake Chickamauga. They are served by septic tanks but about 20 percent are having drain field problems and their owners would welcome the sewer service the city is trying to extend to them, according to the city engineer.

Mr. Wilkinson said the flower, which blooms in May, is on the endangered plant list, although it is known to flourish in the canyon

area along the Tennessee River just west of Chattanooga.

But the city has learned the hard way that it also grows in other sections here and any construction that threatens it is in danger of being halted.

"I don't know that there was any way we could have avoided the delays and extra expenses in these cases," Mr. Marcellis said. "The complaints came from the outside, and we didn't even know of the existence of this flower."

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Infoline 209-1100

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The Chattanooga Free Press is published daily (USPS: 101-340) Postmaster: Send address changes to above address. Second-class postage paid at Chattanooga, TN.